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**VCTC's Freeway Service Patrol assists 3,000 motorists in first year;
driver recognized for outstanding service**

CAMARILLO - Since launching a year ago, the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) and a team of helpful drivers have assisted thousands of motorists along Ventura County highways.

FSP placed roaming tow trucks along three segments of the U.S. 101 and SR-118 freeways, with the goal of quickly getting disabled vehicles moving again to reduce congestion and prevent secondary incidents, at no cost to the motorists.

Managers of the FSP program provided an update about the new service and recognized the first Driver of the Year during the Commission's regular meeting on Friday, March 4.

Since its launch in March 2021, the program has logged more than 3,000 motorist assists, including providing direct assistance to motorists more than 2,000 times.

During peak traffic hours Monday through Friday, trucks roam along three segments of highways: US-101 from the Ventura County/Los Angeles County line to Camarillo Springs Road; US-101 from Camarillo Springs Road to Rice Avenue; and CA-118 from Ventura/Los Angeles County line (Rocky Peak) to State Route 23.

Services include changing a flat tire, providing a gallon of fuel, and taping leaky hoses. If the FSP driver cannot get a vehicle running quickly, the vehicle can be towed to a safe location off the freeway at no charge, where the motorist can wait for additional assistance.

The most frequent assistance types provided to motorists included fixing flat tires (499), addressing mechanical issues (495) and providing fuel to motorists who had run out (257).

FSP drivers were able to quickly restart vehicles in 75% of cases and the remaining 25% of vehicles were towed to a safe location off the highway.

Platinum Tow & Transport Inc. of Camarillo is the tow truck contractor for the program. At the meeting, VCTC recognized Platinum employee and FSP driver Richard Henderson as the 2021 Driver of the Year for his outstanding service.

“We knew when we started this program that it provides an essential public service,” said Tony Trembley, VCTC chair and Camarillo City Council member. “In its first year alone, the Freeway Service Patrol program has kept thousands of motorists safe and traffic flowing smoothly.”

FSP service could be coming to more miles of Ventura County highways soon. In the next year, VCTC will consider expanding the service along U.S. 101 through Oxnard and Ventura.

“The FSP program provides an invaluable service to Ventura County’s motorists, providing critical assistance in situations that are often very stressful,” said VCTC Executive Director Martin Erickson. “It has become an integral component of VCTC’s mission to keep Ventura County moving.”

About Freeway Service Patrol

Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) is a joint program of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and Ventura County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE). The local SAFE contracts with tow contractors to provide the FSP service. CHP provides daily oversight and direction to the contractor and their drivers. Caltrans provides 75% of program funding. Local matching funds come from a \$1 annual fee on vehicles registered in Ventura County. In December 2019, VCTC approved a resolution to provide 25% of matching funds for the program.

Learn more about the program at goventura.org/fsp.

About the Ventura County Transportation Commission

The Ventura County Transportation Commission is the regional transportation planning agency committed to keeping Ventura County moving. Program information is available at goventura.org.

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